

Message Text

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46

ACTION OPIC-06

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 EB-07 AID-05 COME-00 INT-05

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /037 W
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P 251545Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1602

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN

SUBJECT: OPIC PROJECT INITIATIVE

REF: STATE 175089

1. AMBASSADOR SPOKE WITH PERMANENT SECRETARY DEIGH AT MINISTRY OF MINES THIS MORNING IN ABSENCE OF MINISTER KAWUSU KONTEH WHO IN LONDON UNTIL AUGUST 1ST. MRS. DEIGH SAID THAT THERE IS NO CURRENT PROSPECTING OR MINING CONCESSION FOR CHROME IN SIERRA LEONE AND THAT SHE BELIEVED GOSL WOULD MOVE IMMEDIATELY TO ENTERTAIN ANY PROPOSALS MADE BY REPUTABLE COMPANY. SHE SAID THAT DELAYS IN EARLIER RUTILE NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN COMPLICATED BY PREVIOUS EXISTENCE OF SHERBRO MINERALS AND THE NEED FOR SIERRA RUTILE (SRL) TO RENEGOTIATE OLD CONCESSIONS AND REPAY FORMER LOAN. NEW NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD MOVE SPEEDILY; MAJOR FACTOR WOULD BE GOVERNMENT'S DECIDING HOW AND WHEN TO EXERCISE ITS PARTICIPATION.

2. EMBASSY BELIEVES GOSL UNLIKELY EXTEND SAME CONCESSIONARY TERMS ON CHROME AS WERE NEGOTIATED BY BETHLEHEM/NORD TEAM. GOSL WILL PROBABLY BE ANXIOUS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT AGREEMENT IN SRL CASE TO LIMIT PARTICIPATION TO MAXIMUM 47 PERCENT WAS AN EXCEPTION TO AND NOT A CHANGE IN POLICY OF RESERVING RIGHT TO EVENTUAL 51 PERCENT GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION. HOWEVER,
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GOSL LIKELY BE PRAGMATIC AS REGARDS TIMING AND ACTUAL

EXTENT OF EXERCISING SUCH RIGHT. EMBASSY CONFIDENT
THAT ROOM EXISTS FOR NEGOTIATION ON THESE MATTERS.

3. WE MUST DISCUSS POTENTIAL PROJECT WITH MINISTER OF MINES
SOON AFTER HIS RETURN. WE OWE IT TO HIM NOT TO BEGIN
MOVEMENT WITHOUT HIS BEING ABLE TO BECOME INVOLVED
PERSONALLY.

4. DIRECTOR OF MINES GBASSIE HAS STATED THAT MINISTRY
GEOLOGISTS HAD LOCATED OTHER POSSIBLE CHROME DEPOSITS
OUTSIDE OF OTHERWISE KNOWN AREAS AROUND KENEMA. HE
WILLING SHOW INTERESTED MINEROLOGISTS THESE NEW DIS-
COVERIES SHOULD THEY COME TO SIERRA LEONE. DEIGH
INDICATED US COMPANIES AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES
WELCOME VISIT SIERRA LEONE AT ANY TIME. SHE PROVIDED
SAMPLE OF SPECIAL EXCLUSIVE PROSPECTING FORMS THAT
WOULD HAVE TO BE FILLED OUT BY COMPANY INTERESTED IN
PROSPECTING LICENSE. EMBASSY SENDING FORM TO OPIC
TODAY BY INTERNATIONAL AIR.
SAMUELS

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Message Attributes

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